Joseph Shinn, Jr
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Lt. Cdr. A. M. Shinn

Corner Johnson and Grinnell Sts.

Key West

Florida

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P.O. BOX # 5,
Niles, California,
Nov. 30, 1942.

Dear Allen,

It will probably not surprise you any more to receive a type-written letter from me than it will surprise you to receive any letter at all.

The increase in legibility, if any, will hardly compensate for the disconnected tone of my thoughts, as I try to acquire a smooth and polished manner as I operate this machine.

But the practice will do me some good, if I can get to the point where I can rip off an "Order" - pardon me- I mean a " Notice of eviction" , or a Questionaire, or a crop and labor report, or an application, in less than half a day, and with a copy so that I will not find myself enmeshed in a snare of contradictory guesses or estimates which I will otherwise make about the "business?" of farming.

Now this does sound pretty bad after twelve years, in the farming business, but maybe it is the curiosity about what is going to happen next year that keeps the farmers on the soil.

I do not mean to say that we did poorly this year, because we did quite well for the first time in seven years, but we certainly did not know whether we were on foot or on horseback, and we still don't.

We were all set to take it on the chin this year because we thought it was only reasonable that we would have to dry a large part of the ~~fruit~~- fruit, and we did not think we could get the labor to do it. As usual, we guessed wrong.

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At the last minute, and it really was the last minute this time, it was decided to permit a large amount of fruit to be canned, and we ended up by delivering the highest percentage of fruit to the cannery that we have ever delivered to them. So we had no trouble drying what was left, especially since we had only about half a crop, as did everybody else, and the weather was absolutely perfect, throughout the whole season.

Well, what with this unexpected good luck, and with the bewildering spectacle of the ~~cannerry~~ cannery man running over to stacks of boxes which were leaking juice and then coming back to tell us that it was lovely fruit and to send it right in, our heads were quite turned.

But they were soon turned right back again, the day after harvest ended, when the boss Chinaman announced, "Boy want money now, all boy go to slipyard now." They went, and only three or ~~four~~ four came back; these said,"Too many lady, boy no likee."

So I guess we are right back where we started. We can get good prices for anything we raise, high prices for some things sometimes, but it is a little too much when wages begin to approach the wages in the shipyards,

Of course school kids were turned out for the tomato harvest, and they did save the crop, but it was at a loss to the growers because they were pretty inefficient. No doubt but that we will have these next year ourselves, and the prospect is not one that makes me think we are likely to get rich.

There is one nice thing about all this, however, and that is that there doesn't seem to be much danger

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that people will be able to go out and plant huge increases in acreage like they did in the last war; in fact, a lot of inefficient orchards will propably run down to nothing in the next three or four years.

December 5, 1942

Continuing now, I realize that I have gone into a good deal of detail on this subject, so I will add a few items of fact, and leave the conjectures until later. One which may interest you is that the creek bottom is now filled up to higher than the ground water level at the upper end of the folk's land, and a couple more floods will produce a considerable area of land, replacing the present lake. In fact, I intend to make a road over to the end of I St., (the one with the flagpole on it), next spring.

Just the same, there will still be a place to swim, because the gravel company has been digging with the greatest speed, and has completed the digging up to the farthest points North, right up to the tank, barn and house, and past the sites of the old dairy buildings. No doubt they will soon re-

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It seems that he was considered a rather small-scale farmer. Harry Stevenson has been in the Army a year or more. Max finally got a commission in Naval Intelligence, I believe. Others, like Marsh Kimball, hope to join as specialists. According to the radio news tonight, this may be a thing of the past.

My friend, Allison Ware, from Sacramento, whom you may recall, tried persistently to get in either the Army or the Navy as a specialist, and finally joined through his draft board as an officer candidate, in the Army Engineer Corps. He has not yet completed his basic training, but he says that he cannot be commissioned for combat work unless he reaches the grad rank of Captain, since he is 33. I will be interested to see whether he gets commissioned at all, in view of this age limit.

As for myself, I made the first trip to San Francisco in about a year, and concluded that I was not very desireable material for either Army or Navy. I was told, however, that I might still be called for re-commissinning in the Army, and that I would be notified if it had been determined that I would not be recommissioned in any case. A Navy Lt., Reserve, talked to me very politely for a while, but said that they were really only interested in specialists, and that my sea-faring experiences were too far in the past to be of much value. Later on, maybe, he said. So, being in class 3B now, I guess I might as well see if I can harvest another crop of fruit.

Well, Nellie says I have written too much already, and I guess I have, so I will close with our best wishes to you,

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and Sevilla and Alex and Jimmy, and our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you.

Joe

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